

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

LITTLE GREBE *TACHYBAPTUS RUFICOLLIS* ASSOCIATING WITH HIPPO

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On 14 February 1975 an adult and a full-grown immature Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* were seen in the Hippo Pool in Ngorongoro Crater, northern Tanzania. The adult was in no way associated with a nearby group of hippo which were lying partly submerged in the water, but the young bird was constantly moving along their flanks as they rose and fell, and was actively scrambling up on to their wet sides. There were dense bands of some sort of small flying insects (probably Diptera) which were congregated along the 'tide line' on the hippos' sides, and were generally c.30 cm or more from the water level. It was these insects that the grebe was hunting, and several were caught and eaten while we watched. Later the same bird swam near the head of a hippo and dived a few times, right alongside, before bringing to the surface and eating a c.10 cm leech, presumably detached from the hippo.

We have often seen Little Grebes following closely behind feeding Red-knobbed Coots *Fulica cristata*, apparently for their disturbance factor, but have not observed a grebe/mammal association before.

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A RECORD OF THE EUROPEAN POCHARD *AYTHYA FERINA*  
FROM LAKE OL BOLOSSAT, KENYA

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Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) give only two records of the European Pochard *Aythya ferina* from East Africa, one in south-western Uganda and the other in northern Tanzania.

On 30-31 December 1976 we visited the freshwater lake, Ol Bolossat (0°09'S., 36°26'E.) which is surrounded by flooded grassland at this time of year. Large numbers of both Palaearctic and Ethiopian ducks were utilizing this habitat. We saw two, or possibly three, male European Pochards during the two days. They were present in a mixed party of European Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Shoveler *A. clypeata*, Pintail *A. acuta*, and Yellow-billed Ducks *A. undulata*. The Pochards were easily distinguished from the others by a combination of chestnut-red head, black breast and grey back. In flight, they were readily separable from the more numerous male Wigeon by the lack of white on the wing.

Davey & Harrison (n.d. =1976) report a European Pochard as having been shot at Ol Bolossat during the 1975/76 season, and the Hopsons (1975) mention one (presumably seen) in March 1973 at Ferguson's Gulf, Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolf). Thus the December 1976 birds would appear to constitute the third record for Kenya.

Two male European Teal *Anas crecca* and large numbers (up to eight in sight at one time) of European Marsh Harriers *Circus aeruginosus* were also seen at Ol Bolossat during our visit. Clearly the area warrants regular study by ornithologists.

We would like to thank Dr Glynn Davies for initially drawing our attention to the Pochard by reporting that he thought he had seen one at Ol Bolossat, and to Dr D.J. Pearson for locating the WAGBI report.

## REFERENCES

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AFRICAN HARRIER-HAWK *POLYBOROIDES TYPUS* FEEDING ON CARRION

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On 23 December 1976 at Samburu Lodge, northern Kenya, the fresh hindquarters of a goat were hung by the feet in a tree to attract leopard to feed within sight. Soon after dawn next day, I was attracted by a commotion at this bait, and saw that an immature African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus* was hanging by its feet from the lower part of the bait. It was beating its wings in the characteristic fashion of the species when searching crannies etc., and was seen to be tearing at the meat between its feet. After a few minutes the wing action changed to a frantic beating, but the bird was evidently caught by its claws in the meat and could not free itself. It was at least five minutes before the bird fell on its back to the ground below; then it righted itself and stayed spread-eagled for a few minutes until flying away.

Brown & Amadon (1968) do not mention carrion in the diet of this species, but Rand (1936) records 'carrion' in the stomach of the Madagascar Harrier-Hawk *P. radiatus*; this was a part of the hedgehog-like insectivore *Tenrec ecaudatus* (Tenrecidae); but as the adults are c.25 cm in length they could reasonably be expected to be taken and killed by a Harrier-Hawk, and carrion-feeding in this species remains to be proved.

## REFERENCES

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WATTLED PLOVERS *VANELLUS SENEGALLUS* IN TANZANIA

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Mann (1976), stated that he could "...trace no actual records..." of Wattled Plovers *Vanellus senegallus* for Tanzania. This is a surprising statement since my paper on Tabora birds (Reynolds 1968), listed as R2 in his bibliography, recorded this plover as a rainy season migrant to paddy fields around Tabora, and as breeding in the Ugalla River Game Reserve between August and November.